

Exhibit A

**OLIVIA Y. LITIGATION
MDCPS COVID-19 STATUS UPDATE**

TO: MARCIA LOWRY; ANASTASIA BENEDETTO
LISA TAYLOR; EILEEN CRUMMY

FROM: BAKER DONELSON – LARRY JONES & CLINT PENTECOST

SUBJECT: SECOND UPDATE TO DEFENDANTS' NOTICE OF THE IMPACT OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ON DEFENDANTS' OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE 2ND MODIFIED MISSISSIPPI SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND REFORM PLAN

DATE: APRIL 1, 2020

CC: TAYLOR CHEESEMAN

Defendants filed their Notice of the Impact of the Novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) on Defendants’ Obligations Under the 2nd Modified Mississippi Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan (“2nd MSA”) on March 18, 2020 (“March 18 Notice”).

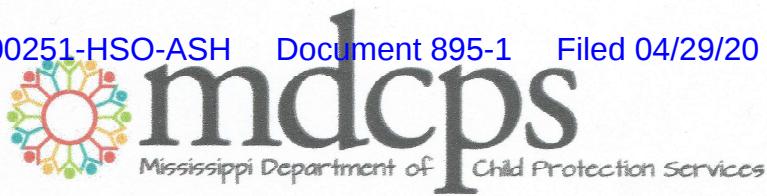
In addition to the COVID-19 Guidelines previously provided in the March 18 Notice and subsequent updates to the Monitor and Plaintiffs, MDCPS has issued the following¹:

- 3/25/20 Essential Personnel Letter
 - 3/26/20 Foster Parent Alert #10: Education Board
 - 3/27/20 ebulletin: Zoom & Google Duo Apps
 - 3/30/20 Foster Parent Alert #11: Update and Useful Information
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¹ MDCPS has implemented policies and taken steps to protect the children in its custody and associated families as well as its staff and employees. The policies and steps being taken by MDCPS are based on the guidance being promulgated and revised and updated by the Mississippi State Department of Health (“MSDH”), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), the World Health Organization (“WHO”), the Children’s Bureau, an Office of the Administration for Children & Families of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (“Children’s Bureau”), and other state and local authorities.

- 3/30/20 Technology Options for Virtual Participation and Contact
- 3/31/20 ebulletin: Lauderdale County Shelter-in-Place Order
- 3/31/20 Executive Order 1465: Lauderdale County Shelter-in-Place
- 3/31/20 ebulletin: Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- 3/19/20 Families First Coronavirus Response Act Summary
- 3/30/20 MDHS Press Release – SNAP Benefits
- 4/1/20 ebulletin: Statewide Shelter-in-Place Order

A copy of each of these is attached for your reference.



The State of Mississippi
Tate Reeves, Governor
Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services
Taylor C. Cheeseman, Interim Commissioner

March 25, 2020

To whom it may concern,

On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency related to COVID-19. Governor Tate Reeves followed suit the next day, declaring a State of Emergency for the entire State of Mississippi. After these declarations of emergency, Governor Reeves issued Executive Order No. 1458, which ordered—among other things—that “all State agencies . . . are directed to promptly review and identify which employees perform essential duties to carry out the entity’s core functions during the State of Emergency. . .”

As Mississippi’s lead child welfare agency, it is imperative that the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services continue to respond to reports of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and ensure the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of all children under the Department’s supervision, throughout the State of Emergency. In furtherance of that mission, as the chief administrative officer of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services under Mississippi Code Section 43-26-1(2), I have determined that all agency personnel capable of telework are essential personnel and shall continue to carry out their functions throughout the State of Emergency. This includes, but is not limited to, travel necessary to investigate reports of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children under our supervision.



Taylor Cheeseman
Interim Commissioner



Foster Parent Alert #10

March 26, 2020

Checking in with everyone today to make sure there are no NEW major issues facing everyone. Hoping the transition to life-at-home is going a little more smoothly and that cabin fever hasn't yet set in.

We've been doing this "at home" cloistering for almost two weeks now, so every foster child should have been contacted or visited by a caseworker. These child visits should continue on a twice-a-month schedule barring any unavoidable interruption so if you haven't heard from anyone at MDCPS by next week, please contact your caseworker. If that isn't successful, reach out to your case supervisor. If you cannot reach either one, please call 1-800-222-8000 and leave a message for the caseworker/supervisor to give you a call.

Another reminder: one child visit every month should be face-to-face with the caseworker in your home. Your caseworker will call beforehand to go through a Safe Contact Checklist, basically to ensure that no one in your home is sick, been tested as positive for COVID-19 or has had direct contact with an infected person. If everything checks out, the worker will use social distancing guidelines for the visit -- which include little or no physical contact, limited exposure or touching of anything inside your home and other precautionary steps such as not sharing food or drink, exchanging paperwork or pens, etc.

Wishing everyone a good evening and an even brighter tomorrow! And, as always, THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU DO!

(Attached to this email is another Education Resources list from our Youth Transition Support Services crew!)

PLEASE READ: Education Board relaxes end-of-year requirements

Great news! Some relief has just arrived for all of you anxious parents struggling to also become homeschooled teachers.

The Mississippi Board of Education met virtually today and relaxed end-of-year promotion and graduation requirements. Hopefully this will help you and your "students" relax and just enjoy the self-directed learning experience.

The board suspended several statewide education policies to manage the impact of extended school closures due to COVID-19. Standardized testing had already been cancelled for this year.

The suspended policies apply only to students in the

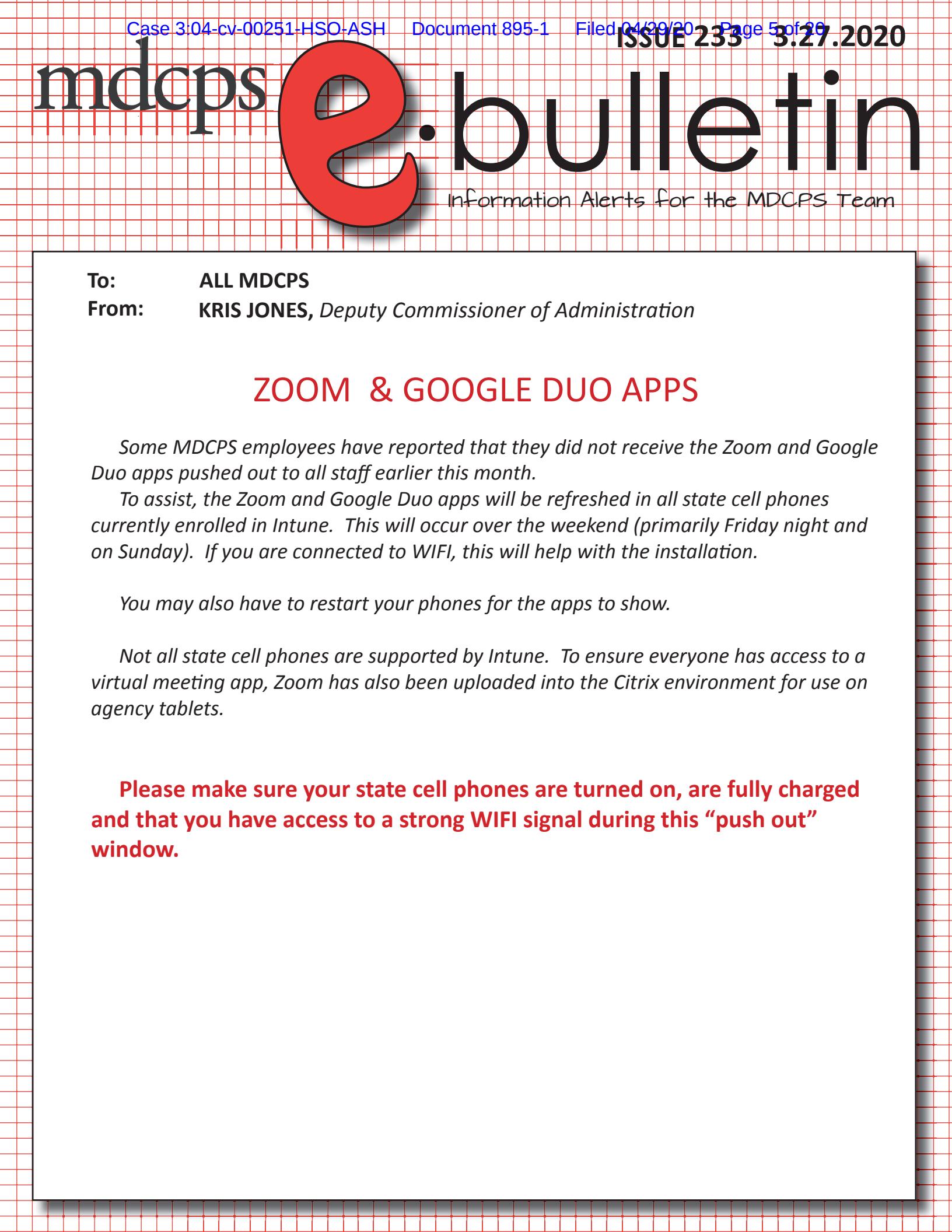
2019-20 school year.

Third graders - Current 3rd graders will be promoted to 4th grade for the 2020-21 school year if the student meets all other district requirements for promotion. There will be no requirement for a third-grade reading test this year.

Graduation for the Class of 2020 - Current seniors who meet all didistrict and state requirements will graduate this school year. The requirement that students take end-of-course assessments in Algebra 1, English II, Biology and U.S. History has been suspended for seniors because these assessments will not be administered in Spring 2020. Statewide, students are

required to earn a minimum of 24 Carnegie units to graduate. Also, any student in grades 7 through 12 who is currently enrolled in Algebra I, Biology, English II and/or U.S. History will not be required to take or pass the corresponding end-of-course subject area test or meet one of the options in lieu of passing the test to meet graduation requirements.

High School credits - School districts shall determine a process for awarding a Carnegie unit credit for courses that are incomplete for school year 2019-20. Local school boards have the authority to suspend or amend their graduation policies for this school year.



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Information Alerts for the MDCPS Team

To: ALL MDCPS
From: KRIS JONES, *Deputy Commissioner of Administration*

ZOOM & GOOGLE DUO APPS

Some MDCPS employees have reported that they did not receive the Zoom and Google Duo apps pushed out to all staff earlier this month.

To assist, the Zoom and Google Duo apps will be refreshed in all state cell phones currently enrolled in Intune. This will occur over the weekend (primarily Friday night and on Sunday). If you are connected to WIFI, this will help with the installation.

You may also have to restart your phones for the apps to show.

Not all state cell phones are supported by Intune. To ensure everyone has access to a virtual meeting app, Zoom has also been uploaded into the Citrix environment for use on agency tablets.

Please make sure your state cell phones are turned on, are fully charged and that you have access to a strong WIFI signal during this “push out” window.

March 30, 2020



Foster Parent Alert #11

While it seems the rest of the world may be shutting down around us -- and essentially withdrawing from the world until things get turned rightside up again -- we just wanted to let you know that MDCPS is still working around the clock to provide supports to you and to move our reunification and adoption cases forward for the children in your care. And, although the number of reports to our Child Abuse/Neglect hotline and website reporting link are roughly half what they were prior to the schools' shutdown, our staff are actively and timely investigating all reports of suspected abuse and neglect in all 82 Mississippi counties.

The work goes on! Our children **MUST** come first.

MDCPS is thrilled to report that, despite the best COVID-19 could throw at us, we saw eight beautiful adoptions finalized in Harrison County last week. These eight children are now "quarantining" in their forever families' homes surrounded by all the love and protection they ever dreamed of. Those eight join the 547 other adoptions finalized through MDCPS this year. Another 122 finalized adoption packets are in the hands of the attorneys and are just awaiting a court hearing to wrap up those as well!

To that end, the Mississippi Supreme Court and the federal Children's Bureau are working with MDCPS and Mississippi's county courts to ensure that the COVID-19 crisis does not derail the important work we do. Cooperation with the courts is stronger today than ever before. Rest assured that Mississippi judges are working with us on a case-by-case basis to make sure your foster children receive the legal attention their cases deserve. **As always - THANK YOU for what you do!**

PLEASE READ: Passing along info as we find it

EDUCATION WEBINAR:

In case all the news coming out of the Mississippi Board of Education related to requirements for children in K-12 are confusing, there is an opportunity to get your questions answered.

On Friday, April 3, from 9 to 10 a.m., the Mississippi Department of Education will offer a free webinar to discuss the changes impacting accountability, assessment, graduation and course grades.

You are invited to participate. No pre-registration is required.

Use the hotlink in the email message to access the

webinar. Please share with anyone who has a child enrolled in kindergarten through Grade 12.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY WEBSITE:

The Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center is another resource that you as foster parents might benefit from. The link below goes to their archived webinar page. Just copy and paste into your web browser. Their website is: www.mspti.org

<http://www.mspti.org/resources.asp?xid=61>

FREE TECHNOLOGY:

With most human interaction reduced to online chats and social media venues, we wanted to pass

along several free resources for computer and smart phone applications to help you and your children interact with friends, family and loved ones outside your home. *(See the attached Resource Sheet.)*

Our MDCPS frontline, adoption and licensure caseworkers and supervisory staff all have Facetime, Google DUO and ZOOM available on their state-issued work cell phones. You may want to download one or all of these programs to assist you in communicating with them as well as with virtual face-to-face visits with their biological family members.

Please let us know how we can help and support you. Stay safe!

Low or No Cost Technology Options for Virtual Participation and Contact

- Facetime - Video Calling
 - Get it on: Apple Products from the Apple App Store
 - Cost: Free
 - This is a video calling app that can only be downloaded from the Apple App store for video calling other Apple products
- Snapchat - Video Calling, Text Messaging, Video Messaging
 - Get it on: Android and Apple mobile devices.
 - Cost: Free
 - This is a video messaging app that allows all messages and conversations to not be saved.
- Whatsapp - Video Calling, Text Messaging
 - Get it on: Computers, and Android and Apple mobile devices.
 - Cost: Free
 - Whatsapp is an internationally used messaging app that is widely popular globally.
- Skype - Video Calling, Text Messaging
 - Get it on: Computers, web browsers, and Android and Apple mobile devices.
 - Cost: Free
 - Skype is a widely known video calling platform that uses Microsoft's AI technology for features such as live translations.
- Hangouts - Text Messaging, Video Calling
 - Get it on: Web browsers, and Android and Apple mobile devices.
 - Cost: Free
 - Google Hangouts is a robust communication platform on the web.
- Duo - Video Calling
 - Get it on: Android and Apple mobile devices
 - Cost: Free
 - This is the Google analog to Apple Facetime. But can be used on Android phones and Iphones.
- Signal / Telegram - Encrypted Text Messaging
 - Get it on: Android and Apple mobile devices
 - Cost: Free
 - Both Signal and Telegram are messaging applications that use end to end encryption.
- Facebook Messenger - Video Calling, Text Messaging
 - Get it on: Computers, web browsers, and Android and Apple mobile devices
 - Cost: Free
 - This is a communication service tied to Facebook's social network.
- Microsoft Teams - Video Calling, Text Messaging, Community Management, Productivity
 - Get it on: Computers, web browsers, and Android and Apple mobile devices.
 - Cost: Free
 - Teams is Microsoft's chat productivity application. It allows for collaborating and staying in contact with multiple people within the team.
- Discord - Video Calling, Text Messaging, Community Management

- Get it on: Computers, and Android and Apple mobile devices
 - Cost: Free
 - Discord is a robust community management tool. Create servers or rooms for different interests or teams to communicate and keep in touch.
- FreeConference / FreeConferenceCall / FreeConferenceCalling - Conference Calling Service that is Free
 - Get it on: Create the account online using an email address and use the service with a phone.
 - Cost: Free
 - Each of the listed above are not typos. Each is an individual company that provides conference calling for free.
- Google Voice - Cloud Based Phone Number
 - Get it on: Computers, and Android and Apple mobile devices
 - Cost: Free if used to make calls within the United States. Calls to other countries have a cost per minute.
 - Google Voice is a cost effective way to have a phone number and make phone calls so long as you have access to the internet.
- GotoMeeting
 - Get it on: Computers, and Android and Apple mobile devices
 - Cost: Free for two weeks.
 - Video conference calling for many people
- Marco Polo
 - Get it on: iphone and ipad
 - Cost: free
 - "video walkie talkie," a video chat app that lets you send quick messages back and forth.

In response to COVID-19 developments, some internet providers are offering free services to low-income families and households with students.

Free Comcast Xfinity internet

Comcast Xfinity is currently offering its [Internet Essentials](#) program free for two months to new customers. The internet provider is also automatically increasing speeds for all Internet Essentials customers.

Comcast Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots are also open and free to use by anyone.

Free internet for students from Charter Spectrum

Households with students K-12 or university students can sign up for a new Charter Spectrum internet account to get the first two months of internet with speeds up to 100 Mbps for free.

Installation fees will be waived for those who qualify for the offer. Call 1-844-488-8395 to enroll.

Spectrum Wi-Fi hotspots are also currently open and free to use.

Free internet for students from Altice

Altice internet providers Suddenlink and Optimum are offering 60 days of free internet service for households with K-12 or college students. Internet speeds are up to 30 Mbps if you do not already have access to a home internet plan. To sign up, call 1-866-200-9522 if you live in an

area with Optimum internet service, or call 1-888-633-0030 if you live in an area with Suddenlink internet service.

Free low-income internet from Cox

Until May 12, 2020, Cox is offering the first month of its low-income internet program, [Connect2Compete](#), for free. The internet service is also providing free phone and remote desktop support for technical support during that time.

For more information from the college, go to:

www.highspeedinternet.com/resources/are-there-government-programs-to-help-me-get-internet-service

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Information Alerts for the MDCPS Team

To: ALL MDCPS
From: TAYLOR CHEESEMAN, *Interim Commissioner*

LAUDERDALE COUNTY - SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDER

This morning, Governor Tate Reeves issued his first shelter-in-place order related to the COVID-19 emergency. The order applies to Lauderdale County because it "has been identified as a region that is at higher risk for transmission of COVID-19." This order will take effect at 10:00 p.m. tonight, March 31, 2020, and will remain in effect until 11:59 p.m. on April 14, 2020. Under the order, individuals in Lauderdale County generally are ordered, subject to certain exceptions, to stay at home or in their place of residence.

In his public remarks about the order this morning, Governor Reeves acknowledged that this is the first, but likely not the last, of such orders. As local communities begin work to apply and enforce these orders, it is important that all MDCPS staff and service providers clearly understand how this order affects our work.

Executive Order No. 1463, signed by Governor Reeves on March 24, 2020, declared that child protection and child welfare are essential government functions, and that "vendors that provide essential services or products . . . needed to ensure the continuing operation of Essential Business or Operation, operation of government agencies, and to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the public" are essential businesses. On March 25, 2020, I issued a letter to all MDCPS staff, consistent with prior guidance in the MDCPS Emergency Telework Policy, that under Executive Order No. 1458 and Mississippi Code Section 43-26-1(2), I had determined "that all agency personnel capable of telework are essential personnel and shall continue to carry out their functions throughout the State of Emergency."

Accordingly, all MDCPS functions are considered essential government functions, all MDCPS staff capable of telework are considered essential personnel, and all MDCPS contracted providers are considered essential businesses.

Today's shelter-in-place order exempts from its restrictions individuals carrying out essential government functions or conducting essential businesses. It states that "Essential Businesses or Operations identified in Executive Order 1463 as Supplemented may remain open and shall operate at such a level as necessary to provide essential services and functions." It further allows for such travel as is necessary to conduct these essential activities provided, however, that all such individuals abide by CDC and MSDH guidelines for preventative hygiene measures and appropriate social distancing.

Accordingly, MDCPS staff and MDCPS service providers should continue operations during the period the shelter-in-place order is in effect utilizing all preventative measures addressed in prior guidance issued by MDCPS, MSDH, and the CDC.

Further, all MDCPS staff should keep a copy of my March 25, 2020, letter regarding ESSENTIAL STAFF saved to their phone when engaged in any travel to complete their work.

MDCPS staff should wear/carry their MDCPS ID badge during work.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1465

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Mississippi and Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-11(b)(17), I issued a Proclamation declaring that a State of Emergency exists in the State of Mississippi as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency for COVID-19 beginning on January 27, 2020, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic, and on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a nationwide state of emergency due to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 and the effects of its extreme risk of person-to-person transmission throughout the United States and Mississippi significantly impact the life and health of our people, as well as the economy of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the risk of spread of COVID-19 within Mississippi constitutes a public emergency that may result in substantial injury or harm to life, health, and property within Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, on March 26, 2020, the State Department of Health announced new and expanded measures to increase testing and data analysis to identify regions and localities that are at higher risk for transmission of COVID-19 and to provide more location-specific restrictions and limitation of movement and social interaction to combat the virus in those regions and localities; and

WHEREAS, Lauderdale County has been identified as a region that is at higher risk for transmission of COVID-19; accordingly, as an additional measure to disrupt the spread of the COVID-19 virus within Lauderdale County, individuals residing there will need to temporarily remain in their home or place of residence and certain businesses and public amenities in need to be temporarily closed to the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tate Reeves, Governor of the State of Mississippi, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, do hereby order and direct as follows:

I. Shelter in Place

a. **Duration:** This Shelter in Place shall be effective 10:00 p.m. March 31, 2020, and shall remain in full force and effect until 11:59 p.m. April 14, 2020, unless rescinded, modified or extended.

b. **Shelter in Place:**

- i. Pursuant to the Mississippi Emergency Management Act including but not limited to Miss. Code. Ann. §§ 33-15-11(b)(1), 33-15-11(b)(4), 33-15-11(b)(6), 33-15-11(c)(1), 33-15-11(c)(4) & 33-15-31, with exceptions described herein, all individuals currently living in Lauderdale County are ordered to stay at home or in their place of residence except as allowed in this Executive Order
- ii. For individuals whose residences are unsafe or become unsafe (for example, because of domestic violence, lack of sanitation or utilities) they may, and are encouraged to, seek alternate locations. Local law enforcement and other officials shall assist such individuals to secure such alternative locations.
- iii. Individuals using outdoor space when outside their homes or residences at all times shall maintain social distancing of a minimum of 6 ft. distance between each individual and shall avoid gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.
- iv. For purposes of this Executive Order the terms "home" and "residence" include single family homes, hotels, rental units, shelters, mobile home parks, and similar facilities used as an individual's principal dwelling.

c. **Evictions Suspended:** Pursuant to Miss. Code. Ann. §§ 33-15-11(c)(1) and 33-15-11(c)(4), evictions within Lauderdale County are suspended, and all state, county and local law enforcement officers in Lauderdale County are directed to cease enforcement of orders of eviction for residential premises during this Shelter in Place Order. No provision contained within this Executive Order shall be construed as relieving any

individual of the obligation to pay rent, to make mortgage payments, or to comply with any other obligation that an individual may have under tenancy or mortgage.

d. *Non-essential Business and Operations Cease*

- i. All businesses and non-profit entities operating within Lauderdale County, except for Essential Business or Operations identified in Executive Order No. 1463 as Supplemented (which is incorporated herein by reference), shall cease operation and all activities except Minimum Operations as defined herein.
- ii. Minimum Operations are those activities necessary for the business or operation to maintain the condition of facilities, premises and equipment, value of business inventory, payroll, employee benefits, security, and to facilitate employees of the business or operation to continue to work remotely from their residences.

e. *Essential Business or Operations Remain Open*

- i. Essential Businesses or Operations identified in Executive Order 1463 as Supplemented may remain open and shall operate at such level as necessary to provide essential services and functions.
- ii. For clarity, Essential Healthcare Operations identified within Executive Order 1463 as Supplemented shall be construed broadly to avoid impact or interruption of the delivery of essential healthcare, but does not include fitness and exercise gyms, dance studios, clubs, tattoo parlors, spas, salons, barber shops, and other similar personal care and grooming facilities.
- iii. Restaurants and Bars may remain open limited to drive-thru, curbside, and/or delivery service.

f. *Prohibited Activities*

- i. Consistent with Executive Order No. 1463 as Supplemented, all public and private social and other non-essential gatherings in groups of more than 10 people in a single space at the same time where individuals are in close proximity (less than 6 ft.) to each other shall be cancelled or rescheduled.
- ii. All places of amusement and recreation, whether indoors or outdoors, including but not limited to amusement parks and rides, museums, playgrounds, children's party and play facilities, parks (not including walking trails), movie theaters, bowling alleys, and social clubs, shall be closed to the public.

g. *Essential Activities:* Individuals may leave their residences only to perform the following Essential Activities.

- i. To engage in activities or perform tasks necessary to their health and safety, or the health and safety of their family or household members (including pets) or the health and safety of those persons who are unable to or should not leave their home.
- ii. To obtain necessary food, services or supplies for themselves and members of their household needed to maintain the safety, sanitation and essential operation of the home or residence, or to deliver those services or goods to those persons who are unable to or should not leave their home.
- iii. To engage in individual outdoor activity and recreation.
- iv. To perform work providing essential products and services at Essential Businesses or Operations (as defined in Executive Order No. 1463 as Supplemented) or to carry out activities permitted in this Executive Order, including Minimum Operations.

h. *Essential Travel:* Individuals engaged in Essential Travel must adhere to the CDC and the Mississippi Department of Health recommendations and guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing (6 ft. between individuals) and aggressive hygiene including frequent handwashing (minimum 20 seconds), and use of hand sanitizer. For purposes of this Executive Order, Essential Travel includes travel for the following purposes:

- i. Travel for Essential Business or Operation, as defined in Executive Order No. 1463 as Supplemented.
- ii. Travel for Essential Activities, as defined herein.
- iii. Travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons including to obtain COVID-19 testing for such individuals.
- iv. Travel to or from educational institutions including public and private K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and other educational institutions for purposes

of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and other education related purposes.

- v. Travel to or from their place of residence.
- vi. Travel required by law enforcement or court order, including to transport children pursuant to a custody agreement.

- i. **County and Local Municipal Authority:** Nothing in this Executive Order shall limit or alter the authority of any local or county authority from adopting orders, rules, regulations, resolutions, and actions that are more strict than established herein, provided that they do not impose restrictions that prevent any Essential Business or Operation as identified in Executive Order No. 1463 as Supplemented from operating at such level necessary to provide essential services and functions during this COVID-19 State of Emergency.

II. Delegate Authority to Issue and Enforce Quarantine and Isolation Orders:

- a. Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-11(b)(5) & § 33-15-31, the State Health Officer in consultation with the Governor is authorized and empowered to issue such orders as necessary to carry out, implement, and enforce any quarantine or isolation orders to contain and restrict transmission of COVID-19.
- b. That this authority is in addition to, and consistent with, the Mississippi State Department of Health's authority to issue, maintain and enforce isolation and quarantine orders pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 41-23-5 and other controlling law.
- c. Nothing in this Executive Order limits or alters the authority under Miss. Code Ann. §21-19-3 for a governing authority of a municipality from enacting and enforcing more restrictive measures to contain and restrict transmission of COVID-19.

III. Enforcement of Shelter in Place:

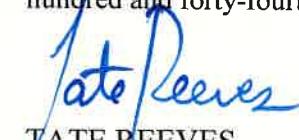
- a. This Executive Order may be enforced by all State, County and Local law enforcement, as well as by other governmental entities (such as State and local departments of health) to the fullest extent under Mississippi law including, *inter alia*, Miss. Code. Ann. §§ 33-15-11(b)(5) & 33-15-11(b)(6).
- b. Violations of this Executive Order are subject to the provisions of Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-43.

- IV. That all departments, commissions, agencies, institutions, and boards of the State of Mississippi, political subdivisions thereof, counties, municipalities and school districts are authorized and directed to cooperate in actions and measures taken in response to COVID-19 during the State of Emergency.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

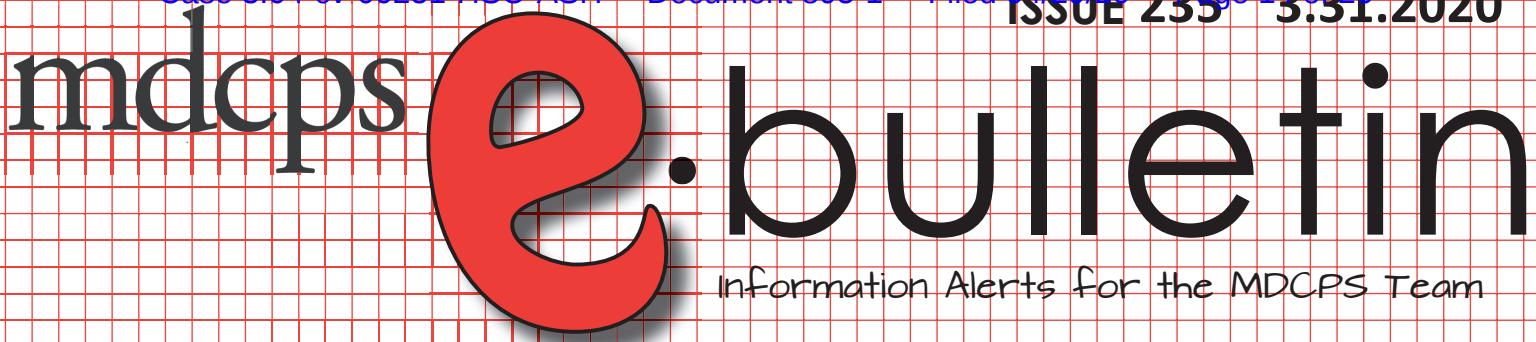
DONE in the City of Jackson, on the 31st day of March, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-fourth.


TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR

BY THE GOVERNOR



MICHAEL WATSON
SECRETARY OF STATE



mdcps e.bulletin

Information Alerts for the MDCPS Team

To: ALL MDCPS
From: KRIS JONES, *Deputy Commissioner of Administration*

FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act creates additional provisions that may be applicable to MDCPS staff. Guidance related to these provisions has been issued by the Department of Labor. See ATTACHMENT to this email.

A link to the press release is included for your reference.

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20200326>

Additional guidance is expected.

The applicable dates are April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

All questions related to this matter should be directed to:

MDCPS-COVID19@mdcps.ms.gov



1101 WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON, VA 22209

TEL (202) 682-0100

FAX (202) 204-0071

WWW.APHSA.ORG

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (HR 6201)

Last Updated March 19, 2020

On March 12, the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) was introduced in the House to provide additional funding and authority to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and support households facing economic hardship as a result of the virus. On March 18, after multiple revisions, the Senate passed the bill. The legislative proposal includes proposed policies and appropriations that would aide state and local human service agency response to emerging needs in their communities.

NUTRITION SUPPORTS

- 1. SNAP Benefits** - The bill provides added flexibility and funding to use SNAP benefits to meet emerging needs in the community.
 - *SNAP Benefits Due to School Closures* – Provides Congressional authority for states to issue temporary SNAP benefits to households with children eligible for free or reduced school meals, for both SNAP and non-SNAP recipients, if schools are closed for at least five consecutive days. The Secretary of Agriculture may authorize State educational agencies and school food authorities to release appropriate information for this to be carried out. The benefits will be not less than the value of meals at the free rate. Affected areas must have a public health emergency declaration and an approved State agency plan for issuing the benefits.
 - *Waives SNAP Work Requirements* – Temporarily waives work requirements in areas with a public health emergency designation; states may still require individuals comply with requirements of programs offered by the State agency. Disregards months during the public health emergency from being counted towards work requirements for ABAWDs.
 - *Adds Flexibility in SNAP Administration* – Provides flexibility for states to issue emergency allotments to SNAP recipients to address temporary food needs not greater than the maximum monthly allotment and to adjust benefit issuance methods based on circumstances on the ground.
- 2. Additional Nutrition Programs** - The bill provides additional funding for nutritional supports and codifies strategies to serve children and seniors in non-congregate settings.
 - *Emergency Funding for WIC and Commodity Assistance Program* – Appropriates \$500 million to the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and \$400 million to the Commodity Assistance Program.

The American Public Human Services Association advances the well-being of all people by influencing modern approaches to sound policy, building the capacity of public agencies to enable healthy families and communities, and connecting leaders to accelerate learning and generate practical solutions together.

INFLUENCE. BUILD. CONNECT.

- *Meal Service with Appropriate Safety Measures* – Builds off recent USDA guidance to permit child and adult care centers to seek alternatives to traditional congregate settings and other safety measures deemed appropriate in regard to COVID-19 for providing meals to individuals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and authorizes USDA to waive nutritional content requirements if necessary to provide meals due to a supply chain disruption.
- *Allowable Increase in Federal Costs for School Lunch* – The Secretary may grant waiver requests to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act that increases Federal costs.
- *Funds Aging and Disability Service Programs* – Appropriates \$250 million for home-delivered nutrition services (\$160 million), congregate nutrition services (\$80 million), and nutrition services for Native Americans (\$10 million).

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

1. **Enhanced Medicaid FMAP** – Allows for a temporary increase in the Federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) to be increased by 6.2 percentage points for each state for each quarter during a COVID-19-related public health emergency.
2. **Diagnostic Testing** – Ensures that all testing of COVID-19 be free to those being tested, whether they be covered by private or public health insurance, or do not have health insurance. Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP would be tested under no cost-share, but if the state plan includes cost-share, they must submit a State Plan Amendment to change this. The bill requires the National Disaster Medical System to reimburse laboratories for testing in those without health coverage. The bill does not address any treatment costs.

LABOR

1. **Paid Sick Leave** – After the first 10 days of leave that an employee takes unpaid, they will be paid for each subsequent day that is equal to at least two-thirds of what they would have made otherwise (not to exceed \$200/day or \$10,000 total). This does not apply to businesses with 25 employees or less.
2. **Emergency Leave** – If an employee is being quarantined related to COVID-19 or has been advised to self-quarantine, is experiencing symptoms, is caring for someone with symptoms, is caring for their children due to school closures, or has another similar condition, their employee shall provide paid sick time if they are unable to telework unless the employee is a health care provider or emergency responder.
3. **Extended Unemployment Compensation** – In states where unemployment compensation claims have increased by at least 10% over the same quarter, the bill provides 100% federal funding for Extended Benefits, which normally requires 50% funding to come from states.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, March 30, 2020

Contact: The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office of Communications
 Danny Blanton, (601) 359-4612, danny.blanton@mdhs.ms.gov OR
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MDHS announces emergency supplement benefits for SNAP recipients

(Jackson, Miss.) – The Mississippi Department of Human Services is making emergency food assistance available to families that have been impacted by the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis.

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has approved issuing emergency supplement benefits for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients for March and April 2020, once eligibility for SNAP has been determined.

“Our primary commitment is, and always will be, helping Mississippi families when they need it most, especially during this time when so many lives are being affected,” MDHS Executive Director Bob Anderson said. “We will continually make every effort to provide assistance to children and families who need it, especially in the face of the unprecedented effects of this pandemic.”

Households determined eligible for SNAP benefits will receive an emergency food benefit in March and April that, combined with the benefit amount the household is certified to receive, will equal the maximum benefit for the household, based on its size.

For example, the maximum monthly benefit amount a one-person household could receive is \$194. A one-person SNAP household currently entitled to receive \$100 will receive an additional \$94 for both March and April 2020.

Please see the table below which outlines the maximum monthly allotment based on the number of people in the SNAP household.

Number of People in the Household	Maximum Monthly Amount
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646

5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1018
8	\$1164
9	\$1310
10	\$1456

Households not currently receiving SNAP benefits may apply for benefits online and, if determined eligible based on federal regulations, may receive the emergency supplement. All MDHS county office lobbies are currently closed as a precaution for COVID-19. During this time, the department is asking applicants to complete the application process for food assistance online at <https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/applications/>. Select “SNAP/TANF Prescreening Application” and follow the instructions.

In order to expedite the application process, applicants are encouraged to upload all their verification documents to the application prior to submitting to MDHS. The verification documents required include:

- Proof of identity (driver's license, etc.).
- Social Security Numbers for all household members.
- If employed, proof of income (wage stubs, earning statements, etc.) for the four weeks prior to submission or last filed tax return if self-employed. If recently unemployed, proof of employment ending.
- Any other income such as: social security/railroad retirement, other disability, VA income, pensions, unemployment, child support, alimony, money from other people (cash gifts), worker's compensation.
- Proof of Mississippi residency.
- Expenses such as utility bills, rent/mortgage payments, lot rent, property taxes, home insurance, and child support payments made in accordance with a court order, etc.
- Resources such as checking accounts, savings accounts, IRA account, valuable coins, stocks or bonds, nonrecurring lump sum payments, recreational vehicles (boat, 4-wheeler, off road vehicles), personal property, buildings and certain land, recreational properties belonging to you or anyone for whom you are applying.
- Medical expenses that exceed \$35 for family members 60 years of age or older or disabled such as: doctor visits, hospital visits, prescriptions, Medicare premiums, health insurance premiums, glasses, dentures, hearing aids, part D prescription premiums, transportation expenses to and from doctor or hospital; pharmacy pick-ups, etc.
- You may be asked to provide additional information based on your circumstances.

Once the application and verifications have been submitted, you will receive instructions from your county office on how to complete the eligibility process. Applicants **DO NOT** need to call the MDHS office for an interview. The application and verification documents can also be completed and mailed to the local county office; however, this will result in a delay in the receipt and processing of the application. Applicants will receive a notification of approval or denial via mail or, if you have signed up for the My MDHS application, by email. If approved, you will be able to receive your SNAP benefits within 30 days of your dated application.

March emergency supplements for ongoing SNAP households were issued on March 29. March 2020 cases approved after the initial emergency supplement was issued will receive the emergency benefit amount two days after the case is approved.

April emergency supplements for ongoing SNAP households will be available April 2. The household's regular benefit amount will be made available on the household's regular issuance date.

SNAP households that currently receive the maximum benefit for its household's size will not receive an emergency supplement.

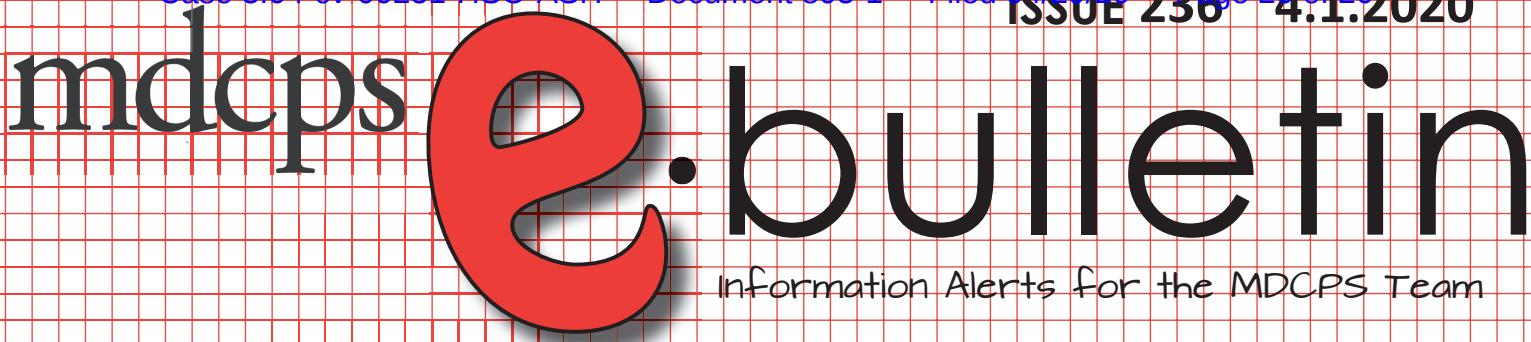
"We know the next few months are going to be a challenge for families across our state who are being affected by this pandemic at no fault of their own," said Anderson. "This emergency food assistance will provide families with the temporary resources they need to support themselves during what we hope will be a short time away from their jobs. Helping families through this emergency is one of the ways we help Mississippians transition from a state of crisis to a state of self-sufficiency."

For the most recent updates and guidelines we have available, go to <https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/covid-19-updates/>.

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NOTE TO EDITOR: Please include the address, phone number, and email for your local county office. A list of all county office locations is attached.

"Offering Mississippian young and old tangible help today to create a lasting hope for tomorrow."



1 mdcps e.bulletin

Information Alerts for the MDCPS Team

To: ALL MDCPS
From: TAYLOR CHEESEMAN, *Interim Commissioner*
KRIS JONES, *Deputy Commissioner of Administration*

STATEWIDE SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDER

Today, Governor Tate Reeves announced an Executive Order that will impose a statewide shelter-in-place directive related to the COVID-19 emergency. It will go into effect this Friday. This Executive Order follows a similar one issued yesterday that was effective last night in Lauderdale County. Several other cities across Mississippi, including Jackson, have also issued similar directives.

The guidance we issued yesterday related to the Lauderdale County order also applies to this statewide order and to those issued by other counties and municipalities. The statewide order exempts from its restrictions essential businesses and government functions.

Our work is considered an essential government function, and support provided by our service providers is considered essential business.

All MDCPS staff, statewide, should continue work following the guidance we issued yesterday.